

## **Course number and title**

3140562 “Syria and Lebanon”

## **Catalog description**

Modern Lebanon and Syria were conjured into existence after the First World War out of the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire. Despite their Arab commonality and close interrelationship, the two states evolved through the twentieth century in markedly different ways. The course explores the modern history and politics of Lebanon and Syria in their wider Middle Eastern context. It examines the interaction between state and society, and considers the outlook for Lebanon and Syria in the early twenty-first century.

## **Textbooks**

El Khazen, F. *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976*. I. B. Tauris (2000)

Harris, W. *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions*. Markus Wiener (1997)

Perthes, V. *The Political Economy of Syria under Asad*. I. B. Tauris (1995)

## **Supplementary Readings**

Khoury, P. *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-45*. Princeton (1987)

Seale, P. *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958*. Yale (1985)

Gates, C. *The Merchant Republic of Lebanon: Rise of an Open Economy*. I. B. Tauris (1998)

Articles, particularly from *Middle Eastern Studies*, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *Middle East Journal*.

## **Course Objectives**

At the end of the course students should have acquired:

- A deepened understanding of the Levant – the strategic center of the Middle East and the historical crossroads of Eurasia and Africa.
- An enhanced appreciation of the sources and dynamics of political conflict, from a region with a dramatically increased population in the late twentieth century, limited resources, and territorial states incompletely adapted to the identities and loyalties of their peoples.

- A more sophisticated ability to synthesize political, economic, social, and geographical factors in explanations of state development and regime behavior.

### **Course Outline (Week 1-14)**

1. Introduction to course themes
2. The Levant in the late Ottoman period, and the emergence of Lebanon and Syria
3. The French Mandate, 1920-45
4. Syria and Lebanon as independent states, 1945-70
5. The Ba'athist regime in Syria
6. Lebanon's wars
7. State, nation, and social stress in the Levant
8. Syria, Lebanon and Middle Eastern geopolitics in the early twenty-first century
- 9 onward – Student seminars and class discussions